

St. Monica's Parish

North Parramatta



"Our mission is to build up an active parish community with the Eucharist as the centre, foster deeper prayer and spirituality and reach out as a witnessing community"

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – YEAR C

15TH DECEMBER 2024

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.

FIRST READING Zephaniah 3:14-18

A reading from the prophet Zephaniah

Shout for joy, daughter of Zion, Israel, shout aloud! Rejoice, exult with all your heart, daughter of Jerusalem!

The Lord has repealed your sentence; he has driven your enemies away. The Lord, the king of Israel, is in your midst; you have no more evil to fear. When that day comes, word will come to Jerusalem:

Zion, have no fear, do not let your hands fall limp. The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult with joy over you, he will renew you by his love; he will dance with shouts of joy for you as on a day of festival.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Is 12

Response: **Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.**

1. Truly, God is my salvation,
I trust, I shall not fear.
For the Lord is my strength, my song,
he became my saviour.
With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation. **(R.)**
2. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!
Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples!
Declare the greatness of his name. **(R.)**
3. Sing a psalm to the Lord
For he has done glorious deeds,
make them known to all the earth!
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. **(R.)**

SECOND READING Philippians 4:4-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

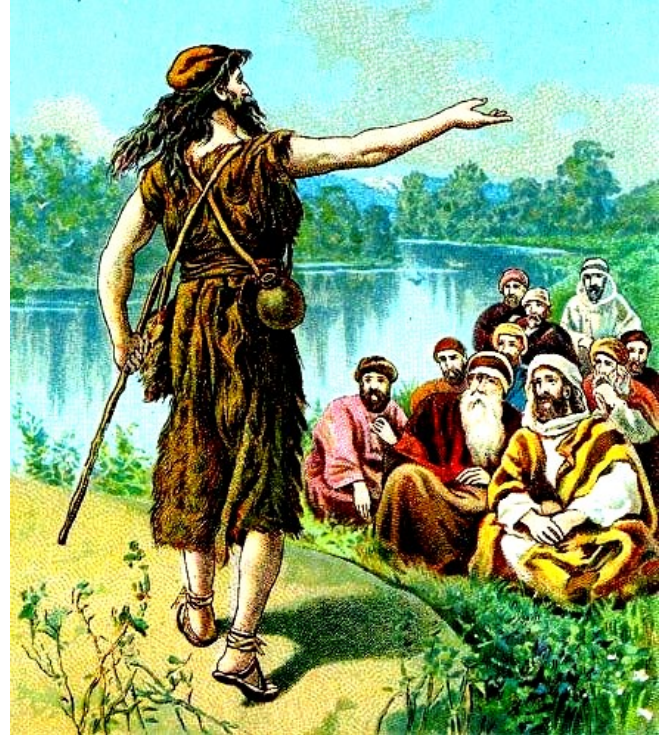
Every I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. Alleluia!



GOSPEL Luke 3:10-18

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same.' There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

The Gospel of the Lord

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.
Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

St. Monica's Catholic Parish

Cnr Church Street and North Rocks Road, North Parramatta

SUNDAY MASSES:	Saturday Vigil - 5pm; Sunday - 9am, 11.30am (Cantonese/Chinese Mass) and 6pm		
WEEKDAY MASSES:	Tuesday-Friday - 9.15am		
EXPOSITION:	Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until 10.45am		
RECONCILIATION:	Friday 10-10.30am, Saturday 4-4.30pm, 3rd Sunday of the month 10:15-11am, or on request		
MARRIAGES:	Please contact the Parish Priest at least 12 months prior		
BAPTISMS:	Please contact the Parish Office for appointment with the Parish Priest. Phone: 9630-1951		
ANOINTING OF THE SICK/ EUCHARIST AT HOME	Please contact the Parish Office or Fr Ephraim Lam Phone: 9630-1951		
PARISH PRIEST/ CHINESE CHAPLAIN:	Fr. Ephraim Lam	Phone: 9630 -1951	Email: shingmanlam@gmail.com
ASSISTANT PARISH PRIEST	Fr. Pio Jang	Phone: 9630 -1951	
POSTAL ADDRESS:	8 Daking Street, North Parramatta, 2151		Website: http://www.stmonicanp.org.au
OFFICE HOURS:	Tuesday-Friday 8.30am-2.30pm	Phone: 9630-1951	Fax: 9630-8738 Email: stmonicanp@bigpond.com

St. Monica's School

School Principal: Fiona Bylsma

Phone: 8832 4100

Fax: 8832-4199

Email: stmonicasparra@parra.catholic.edu.au

COMMENTARY

I want you to be happy

Some people have an image of God who must be obeyed out of fear. Rules of behaviour are kept as part of a deal to avoid punishment. But St Paul was imitating God when he told the Philippians that all he wanted was their 'happiness'. God's deepest desire is that we share divine bliss. St Thomas Aquinas tells us that the goal of human life is this beatific happiness.

Of course, there is a way of life which responds to the Divine Lover. John the Baptist insists on rules of social justice, particularly those which forbid taking advantage of the vulnerable. But these are the minimum. He envisages a response of extravagant generosity. It will take Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Fire to make this possible.

This was effected by the One foretold by John. He doesn't name him, but we know it was Jesus of Nazareth who had the power to unleash such over-the-top generosity. Jesus sent his Holy Spirit at Pentecost as if in wind and fire. This created a new community which, the Acts of Apostles tells us, responded with acts of unrestrained generosity to the vulnerable and needy.

We might pause for a moment to pray for a generous spirit responding in gratitude to the Divine Lover who, as Risen Lord, has the power and will to enable us to be filled with Divine Bliss.

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The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen

Mass Timetable of Christmas 2024 is available at the main entrance of the church. Please take one or scan this QR code.



FEAST DAYS & COMMEMORATIONS

The Octave before Christmas
17th - 24th December 2024

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR THOSE OF OUR PARISH FAMILY WHO ARE SICK. ESPECIALLY

Paul Chiu, John Rodrigues, Dave & Fan Lin Wilson, Francis Lee, Jerry A, Michelle Barnes, Levi Bell, Gesualda Borg, Monica Teresa & Fernanda Carigliano, Margaret Dorahy, Heidi Ellich, Josie Estera, Philippe Kalife, Tim Kelly, Mary Korunic, Lillian Leigh, Monique Malouf, Maria Itang Tagle, Sheila Watts, Tina de Larrazabal, Rosa Santos, Llave Family, Gloria Cherote

MASS INTENTIONS

Please refer to the book near the altar of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

PARISH ACTIVITES



Silent Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until 10.45am.
All are welcome.



St Monica's Parish Rosary Group
Every Wednesday, from 10.00am to 12.00pm in the Parish Centre.
Enquiries : Lynn McBride : 0423 696 961



Christian Meditation Resume on 13th Feb 2025, then on every Thursday, at the Parish Centre.
5:25pm-6:25pm Tai Chi,
6:30pm-7:30pm Christian Meditation.
Participation via zoom is available. Enquiries:
Patricia Brown, email:pabrown02@bigpond.com



Catholic Women's League St Monica's Branch
Third Monday of the month at 10.30 am in the Parish Centre.
Enquiries : Julie Skulander on 0411 988 361



St Monica's Piety Stall (open alternate weeks)
Stall is open on Saturday 4.40 - 6.15pm
Sunday 8.40 - 10.15am
Contact : Julie Skulander on 0411 988 361



St Monica's Art Group Resume on 11th Jan 2025, then every Saturday, 6pm-8pm, at the Parish Centre. New workshops are available each week. Please contact Vera (WhatsApp 0402936947) for details.



Bible Brekkie Resume on 2nd March 2025, then every FIRST Sunday of the month, 10.15am - 11am, at the Parish Office.
Fr. Ephraim will talk about interesting topics from the Bible. All are welcome.



Bible Supper Resume on 6th February 2025, then every FIRST & THIRD Thursday of the month, 8pm-9pm, via Zoom.
Fr. Ephraim will introduce every book from the Bible. All are welcome. To get the Zoom Link please scan the QR code on the left.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

- * 2025 Calendars now on sale, \$10 each
- * Christmas Cards on sale, \$5 per pack
- * Please place proceeds of sales in Poor Box
- * Christmas Appeal envelopes has be placed on Church Pews and the donations can be put in any collection bag at the Masses today

Your traditional generosity of Food /Gifts will be accepted up until 14th/15th December, this will allow for collation and delivery of Hampers before Christmas. It would be appreciated if your food donations could include some Christmas oriented items e.g. Christmas Cake/Puddings, tinned Ham, Christmas lollies etc as well as the usual goodies. We thank you for your generosity as always. S.V.D.P.



Our **Special Religious Education Teachers**, also known as Catechists, are entrusted with the religious education of Catholic students in our local Government Primary and Secondary Schools. Sharing our Catholic faith with our children and young people is a rewarding experience. Volunteers are always welcome. If you are interested in becoming a SRE teacher (catechist) or a helper, please contact our SRE Co-Ordinator, Thomas, on 0413 304 285 or email: tmt889900@gmail.com.

21st/22nd December ROSTERS

	6pm Vigil	9am	6pm
Readers	S. Meleca C. Meleca	S. Younes B. Hooker	M. Novak D. Llevado
Extraordinary Ministers	M. Wilkinson K. Handcock	J. Skulander M. Joseph	
Acolytes	P. Handcock	P. Mooney	A. Cheung
Cleaning	Group 2 - Vera (20th December)		
Children's Liturgy	School Holidays		
Morning Tea	Raj & Innu Kakumanu & Beth		
Counting	Group 1 - Jacob Payra		

Youth + Corner

SOAP Reflection 15th December

Scripture: Luke 3: 10-18

Observation: In this passage, we find Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, urging the crowds around the Jordan River as to what they should do to prepare for the coming of Christ. Though it's not made clear in this passage, reading the verses preceding this reveal that John is speaking to a predominantly Jewish crowd, whom he boldly pronounces to be a 'brood of vipers' seeking to 'flee from the coming retribution.' (Luke 3:7) John warns the Jews (many of whom believe they would be saved by birthright as descendants of Abraham) not to fall victim to complacency, reminding them that as God's chosen people (a nation of priests; see Exodus 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:9) they are called to live as examples of kindness, charity and justice. He explains that doing so does not require great miracles of prophetic scale, but simply being prepared to provide for and serve those in need with compassion and respect.

Application: In modern times, we may not think of ourselves as 'God's chosen people' or 'descendants of Abraham,' but I'm sure many of us do consider our religious beliefs to be a crucial part of our identity. Like the Jewish people of Jesus' time, we too are called to live in service of others, but may catch ourselves falling short of that mark – perhaps the side effect of a world which exhorts self-interest and self-promotion above all else. Whilst it is true that we will ultimately be saved by our faith and not by our actions or deeds, we must not neglect our mission to love and serve others. I would highly recommend reflecting upon James 2:17-24, which reaffirms John's message in plain language - "In the same way faith, if good deeds do not go with it, is quite dead... It is by my deeds that I will show you my faith." As we approach Christmas, let us pray not for more gifts or material objects, but for a heart more like Jesus, a heart ready to serve and moved by compassion for those in need around us!

Prayer: Dear God, I ask for your guidance and strength to help me serve others. Please remind me that every person I encounter is created in your image and deserves to be treated with love and respect. Help me to see the needs of those around me and be willing to step in and help in any way I can. Whether it's offering a kind word, a listening ear, or a helping hand, please give me the courage and compassion to serve others selflessly. Amen.

Youth Announcements



December / Christmas Fundraiser

Christmas is a time of charity and many families aren't as fortunate as ourselves in this season of joy. To give back and provide support to those who need it most, this past month, St Monica's Youth Group have been putting together some art goods such as origami flowers and cards. These will be sold on 15th December. All proceeds will be going towards Vinnie's Christmas Appeal. Thank you in advance for your generous support.

Christmas Carols

We will be singing Christmas Carols on 22nd Dec 2025, at Goondie Nursing Home in Strathfield. Please contact Cheryl (0481 507 169) or Brian (0491 138 451) for more details.